United Nations A/C.5/64/SR.20

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
3 March 2010

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 20th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 17 December 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Maurer ..... (Switzerland)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 132: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Agenda item 131: Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

09-65534 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 132: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/64/7/Add.13, A/64/294 and A/64/349 and Add.1-5; A/C.5/64/10)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/64/349 and Add.1-5, said that the budget proposals for special political missions for 2010 had once again been grouped into three thematic clusters (cluster I: special and personal envoys, and special advisers of the Secretary-General (A/64/349/Add.1); cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (A/64/349/Add.2); and cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding offices, integrated offices and commissions (A/64/349/Add.3)). The budget proposals for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) had been presented separately, in documents A/64/349/Add.4 and Add.5 respectively. As far as possible, the format and presentation of the budget proposals for special political missions mirrored those for peacekeeping operations.

2. Of the 27 special political missions authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, 9 had open-ended mandates; 1 had a mandate expiring on 25 April 2011; 12 had mandates ending between January and December 2010; and 1 was still under consideration by the General Assembly. The mandates of the remaining four missions, which were due to expire at the end of December 2009, were likely to be extended after due consideration by the Security Council.

3. The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) had been transformed into the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA). The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) would be liquidated by 31 December 2009 and thereafter be fully transformed into the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). The mandates of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Lord's Resistance Army-affected Areas and the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC) had been fully liquidated by the end of June 2009.

4. The total 2010 requirements for the 27 missions were estimated at $599,526,500 net. The report contained in documents A/64/349 and Add.1-5 provided mission-by-mission details of existing resources, estimated expenditure by the end of the biennium 2008-2009 and requirements for 2010, which ranged from $690,700 to $241.9 million; those for UNAMA and UNAMI, the two largest missions, accounted for about 66.9 per cent of the total.

5. A total of 5,286 positions were proposed for 2010. The net increase of 595 compared to 2009 mainly reflected the planned expansion of UNAMA and the change in the structure of the United Nations presence in the Central African Republic and in Guinea-Bissau, the impact of which was partially offset by the liquidation of UNIIIC. The two largest missions, UNAMA and UNAMI, accounted for approximately 73.6 per cent of the proposed staffing resources.

6. The resource requirements for UNAMA for 2010 were estimated at $241,944,300 net, reflecting a net increase of 56.2 per cent over the approved budget for 2009, which was mainly attributable to the proposed establishment of 818 additional positions; the opening of six additional provincial offices; the proposed implementation of the Security Gap project and the deployment of additional international security guards to all Mission locations; the proposed expansion of the Mission's air fleet; and the proposed incorporation of quick-impact projects for regions and provinces where UNAMA had, and would have, a presence.

7. The resource requirements for UNAMI for 2010 were estimated at $158,989,300 net, reflecting a net increase of 6.8 per cent over the approved budget for 2009, mainly resulting from increased travel requirements; increased air transportation costs reflecting greater helicopter use; and increased communications and information technology costs related to the Mission's expanded presence throughout Iraq. The proposed budget for UNAMI (A/64/349/Add.5) also contained an update on the status of the construction project related to the planned integrated headquarters compound in Baghdad.

8. Chapter II of the report (A/64/349) provided information based on the reporting requirements

resulting from General Assembly resolution 63/261 on the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs. The action required of the General Assembly was presented in chapter IV of the report.

9. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 10 December 2009 addressed to him by the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/64/10), transmitting a letter from the Secretary-General dated 9 December 2009 regarding the deterioration of the general security situation within Afghanistan and other high threat locations.

10. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's related report (A/64/7/Add.13), said that the Advisory Committee's comments on cross-cutting issues reflected its view that the information on programmatic performance of special political missions provided in the Secretary-General's report and its addendums (A/64/349 and Add.1-5) was not sufficiently clear or specific in terms of the results achieved. Starting with the next budget cycle, more systematic and thorough performance information should be provided, in particular for larger missions such as UNAMA and UNAMI.

11. The Advisory Committee noted the Secretary-General's efforts to respond to the requests made by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/261, as well as to the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its reports on the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/7/Add.32) and on estimates in respect of special political missions for 2009 (A/63/593). Those efforts should be further developed. For example, more attention should be given to explaining the reasons for selecting a particular type of mission, its size and scope, and the choice of lead department. The development of standard operating procedures related to mission start-up, transformation and liquidation should be expedited; and clear benchmarks for progress should be established.

12. The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations on the resources requested for special political missions in the three thematic clusters, as well as for UNAMA and UNAMI, were contained in chapters III, IV and V of its report (A/64/7/Add.13). With regard to cluster I, the Advisory Committee believed that the progress made in implementing the mandate of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region since the preparation of the proposed budget made it possible to reduce the provision for the Office of the Special Envoy to $1,534,600 for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2010. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on the overall post and non-post resources proposed by the Secretary-General for cluster I would entail a reduction of $1.7 million.

13. With regard to cluster II, the Advisory Committee had recommended a small adjustment to the staffing proposals for the Panel of Experts of the Security Council committee on measures relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the re-evaluation of its staffing capacity in the light of experience gained after one year of operation. The Advisory Committee also reiterated the need for greater transparency in the presentation of the resources proposed for hiring consultants. The members of the panels should have the expertise appropriate to their mandate, so that consultants were hired only for short periods, to provide very specialized expertise that was not otherwise available. The Advisory Committee's recommendations for cluster II would entail a reduction of $137,600 in the resources proposed by the Secretary-General.

14. With regard to cluster III, the Advisory Committee considered that the proposed structure of the administrative components of BINUCA and UNIOGBIS was too closely modelled on that of the peacekeeping missions and should be streamlined. In view of the significant variations in the structures and resources proposed for the peacebuilding offices, it also encouraged the Secretary-General to adopt a prudent approach in staffing new offices, taking into account operational requirements. The Advisory Committee had therefore recommended some reductions in the proposed staffing for mission support functions of the two missions, as well as some adjustments to the vacancy factors to be applied to staffing. It also requested the Secretary-General to give greater emphasis to cooperation with the United Nations country teams and provide concrete examples of such cooperation in future budget submissions.

15. The presentation of the proposed budget for the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) was particularly unclear. As developments in Somalia would determine the pace at which planned activities could be implemented, staff should be recruited only as

required and the vacancy factors originally assumed should be adjusted. With regard to the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), the vacancy factors for international and national staff should be adjusted in the light of recent data and experience; the resources proposed for facilities and infrastructure should be reduced in the light of the pattern of expenditure observed; and resources for air transportation should be reduced, as the proposed increase was not proportionate with the additional operational requirements described. The Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $5.8 million in the Secretary-General's overall proposals for the missions under cluster III.

16. In view of the 56 per cent increase in the proposed resources for UNAMA for 2010, future resource requests should provide more systematic, clear and specific information on results achieved and on the conditions required for effective utilization of the resources requested to support the mandated objectives, and clear justification should be given for supplementing existing capacity. In addition, when submitting resource requests for 2011, the Secretariat should provide an analysis of how the Mission's restructuring and approved additional staffing, including the additional capacity and resources to be provided for 2010, had contributed to the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

17. Aware that UNAMA must respond to the priorities set out by the Secretary-General in his report (A/64/349/Add.4) and recognizing the Mission's difficult security environment, the Advisory Committee stressed the need for realistic planning in the further development of the Mission's operations and pointed out the management challenges inherent in the Mission's envisaged simultaneous expansion to new locations and reinforcement in existing locations. The further development of regional and provincial offices should be based on lessons learned to date.

18. In view of the prevailing security situation and the possibility of delays in implementing the operational workplan, the Advisory Committee recommended that, for 2010, provision should be made for two thirds of the staff and non-staff resources requested for the six new provincial offices. Should the pace of expansion be faster, additional resources should be reported by the Secretary-General in the first performance report for the biennium 2010-2011. The Secretary-General should also be requested to report to the General Assembly on progress at the second part of its resumed sixty-fourth session. The Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $9.9 million in staffing and non-staffing resources proposed for UNAMA for 2010.

19. On 10 December 2009, the Advisory Committee had held a hearing with representatives of the Secretary-General regarding the letter dated 9 December 2009 addressed to the President of the General Assembly on the subject of the general security situation within Afghanistan and other high threat locations (A/C.5/64/10). The Advisory Committee was informed that the amount of $7.9 million from the proposed budget of UNAMA that the Secretary-General wished to use to meet the most highly prioritized security requirements for the period between 1 January and 30 April 2010 would be restored to the 2010 UNAMA budget. The Committee accordingly had no objection to that one-off ad hoc arrangement and requested that such utilization should be detailed in the performance report for UNAMA for 2010.

20. Turning to UNAMI, she said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's staffing and non-staffing proposals for 2010. Having been informed that, in view of the planned drawdown of the international forces in Iraq, UNAMI would continue to seek to become more operationally self-reliant and take measures to improve the capabilities of its Safety and Security Service, the Advisory Committee stressed that the impact of the drawdown, including possible financial implications for the United Nations, should be kept under review.

21. The Advisory Committee was concerned that the timeline for the planned construction of an integrated headquarters compound in Baghdad, as described in the Secretary-General's report (A/64/349/Add.5) might not be realistic. The comprehensive report to be submitted to the General Assembly during the resumed sixty-fourth session should provide detailed comprehensive financial requirements and clear timelines for the different phases of its implementation, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/263, as well as clarification regarding project oversight, the level of responsibility of the High-level Advisory Group, the role of the Office of Central Support Services and the results of the High-level Advisory Group's review of lessons learned from other United Nations construction projects. Bearing in mind

that no obligations had been made in 2009 against the commitment authority of up to $5 million for UNAMI approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/263, the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposal for a similar commitment authority of up to $5 million for the biennium 2010-2011.

22. The recommendations contained in the Advisory Committee's report (A/64/7/Add.13) would entail an overall reduction of $17.6 million in the resources proposed by the Secretary-General for special political missions for 2010.

23. **Ms. Ahlenius** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on its follow-up audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs (A/64/294), said that the main objective of the audit had been to determine whether the recommendations contained in the previous OIOS report (A/61/357) had been implemented and to assess the mitigating controls in place to address some of the substantial risks identified. Of the 15 previous recommendations, six had been implemented, seven were still being implemented, and two had been overtaken by the establishment of the Department of Field Support.

24. The audit had found that more effective and efficient backstopping of special political missions required clearer accountability mechanisms and that guidance and procedures for the management and staff of those missions should be further developed. In that connection, the criteria for assigning the lead role for a field mission to either the Department of Political Affairs or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had yet to be finalized, leading to a risk of duplicated responsibilities and unclear accountability.

25. As the Departments of Political Affairs and Field Support had not yet put in place a support strategy and service level agreement for the provision of administrative support to special political missions responsibilities were still unclear, presenting a risk to the Organization. Also still in development were policies, standard processes, guidelines and performance management methods to help Department of Political Affairs desk officers to backstop special political missions effectively. Lastly, the significant increase in special political mission budgets from 1999 to 2009 had not been reflected in the overall Department of Political Affairs budget, which also failed to distinguish the requirements for managing special political missions from those for other Department activities.

26. The eight new OIOS recommendations had all been accepted. They aimed to strengthen accountability mechanisms and internal controls in high-risk areas of the activities of the Department of Political Affairs connected with special political missions. The Department should review its management and backstopping capacity at Headquarters, providing statistics on the distribution of resources. It should propose to the General Assembly an appropriate mechanism for redeploying at Headquarters posts usually attached to missions to ensure stable and adequate capacity to backstop large special political missions for which it had been made the lead department on an exceptional basis. However, such a mechanism must not establish in the Department of Political Affairs backstopping capacities that might already exist in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should expedite the implementation of accountability mechanisms for heads of special political missions led by the Department of Political Affairs, including them within his compacts with senior managers.

27. **Mr. Lafortune** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that, despite the particular challenges associated with establishing accurate budgets for special political missions, the Secretary-General should, to the greatest extent possible, provide Member States with accurate forecasts of resource needs for the full biennium. While the overall provision for special political missions contained in the proposed programme budget for 2010-2011 was about $829 million, the total estimated requirements for 2010 amounted to almost $600 million, leaving an unrealistic balance of about $229 million for 2011. Moreover, as the financial requirements for special political missions tended to fluctuate considerably more than requirements for other activities included in the regular budget and were therefore difficult to analyse, a different method of budgetary presentation should be considered.

28. Special political missions played a key role in preventing, controlling and resolving conflicts, as well as in post-conflict peacebuilding. The three delegations welcomed the background information provided by the Secretariat on the criteria for establishing such

missions and on the "lead department" concept; however, they concurred with the Advisory Committee that the rationale behind the determination of the type of mission, its size and scope of activities, and the lead department should be made clearer. They also urged the Secretariat to develop, for all special political missions, clear performance indicators that adhered to SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable and time-bound) principles, so that Member States could evaluate progress in the achievement of expected accomplishments.

29. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal to establish two new integrated peacebuilding offices, in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, the three delegations understood the Secretariat's desire to draw on lessons learned during the establishment of the administrative structures of peacekeeping missions; however, they concurred with the Advisory Committee that the proposed structures for such offices should not draw too heavily on the experience of the peacekeeping missions.

30. The three delegations, all heavily involved in Afghanistan, firmly believed that UNAMA played a central role in coordinating international action and assistance in support of the Afghan Government, as emphasized at the International Conference on Afghanistan, held in The Hague on 31 March 2009. They fully understood that an increased emphasis on civilian efforts, with a focus on governance and service delivery and a better alignment of international efforts through UNAMA, would help the international community and the Afghan Government to offer a better future for the people of Afghanistan, and they therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the Mission's capacity to implement its mandate. Aware of the challenges UNAMA would face in strengthening its presence outside Kabul in a volatile environment, they requested clarification of the potential impact of the Advisory Committee's recommendations to reduce the appropriation for operational costs and deployment of civilian personnel. The three delegations looked forward to working closely with all Member States to ensure that UNAMA expanded in a manner consistent with the safety and security of United Nations staff, which was a matter of grave concern. In that connection, they expressed their sympathies to the families and friends of the United Nations staff who had lost their lives in Afghanistan in 2009.

31. With regard to UNAMI, the three delegations, recalling that Baghdad remained a high-risk and challenging environment for United Nations staff, looked forward to the completion of the integrated headquarters compound there. As the Secretariat had been forced to reconsider its planning assumptions for that construction project, as well as the project timeline and scope, it should also have provided updated estimated costs. The proposal submitted should be convincing and contain sound financial analysis and assurances that the project would be completed on time and within its budget.

32. Lastly, the three delegations reiterated their concern at the late introduction of the reports before the Committee. For several consecutive years, the General Assembly had been required to consider hundreds of millions of dollars of complex proposals for special political missions close to the end of its session, which made it difficult for Member States to adequately perform their oversight role.

33. **Mr. Melrose** (United States of America), expressing strong support in principle for all United Nations special political missions, said that his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's request for approval from the General Assembly for a commitment authority to undertake design work for the United Nations integrated compound in Baghdad. He urged the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report for consideration by the Committee at the second part of the resumed sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

34. Fully supporting the establishment of new integrated peacebuilding offices in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, his delegation underlined the importance of coordination in that connection with relevant actors at Headquarters and in the field. As the Advisory Committee had recommended, the impact of such Headquarters and United Nations country team coordination should be reported in all budget submissions for special political missions.

35. Expanding the presence of UNAMA throughout Afghanistan was essential to the fulfilment of the Mission's mandate. In that connection, his delegation, committed to ensuring the security of all UNAMA staff and other United Nations personnel in Afghanistan, welcomed the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's recent letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/64/10) and noted the

Secretary-General's intention to restore the funds utilized for priority security measures to the UNAMA budget for 2010.

36. While his delegation wished to underline its commitment to ensuring that all such important mandated activities had the resources they needed to function effectively, at a time of rapidly escalating expenditure every effort should be made to ensure the effective, efficient and transparent use of resources, especially in the current financial climate.

37. **Mr. Al-Mir** (Qatar) said that his delegation recognized the importance of special political missions, which played an important role in maintaining international peace and security. The Secretary-General's good offices should be supported and strengthened not only because they were crucial to the success of peacekeeping operations, but also because they helped to prevent conflicts from escalating to the point of requiring the deployment of peacekeeping operations. He expressed gratitude for the Secretary-General's support of the State of Qatar's efforts to mediate between the parties to the conflict in the Sudan. Resource requirements for special political missions should be viewed in the context of the challenges faced by the international community. The link between present and potential challenges and the need to provide for the financing of special political missions should not be forgotten. The proposed programme budget for the forthcoming biennium should give the Secretariat the capacity to cope with the existing 27 special political missions and any others that might be approved.

38. **Mr. Okochi** (Japan), noting that special political missions now accounted for some 20 per cent of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, said that his delegation shared the Advisory Committee's concern that the Secretary-General lacked a clear basis for determining the type of United Nations presence to be established in different parts of the world. Peacebuilding offices with structures similar to those of peacekeeping missions were proposed under cluster II; regional offices with the appearance of permanent structures were being established in West Africa and Central Asia; and the backstopping functions for UNAMI and UNAMA were carried out by different departments without rational distinction. The assessment of backstopping should be completed expeditiously, to improve the coherence of proposals for special political missions.

39. Noting the overall provision of approximately $800 million for special political missions in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, he said that approval of the Secretary-General's proposed budget of just under $600 million for 2010 would leave only some $200 million for 2011. While his delegation recognized that the resource requirements for special political missions were estimates and were subject to change based on whether mandates were extended, it considered that the General Assembly's budget decisions would lose much of their meaning if amounts were subsequently repeatedly revised. His delegation hoped that discussion of the budgetary structure of special political missions at the resumed sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly would lead to more accurate budget forecasts in future.

40. While the background information provided by the Secretariat to make the process of establishing special political missions more transparent was welcomed, he expressed concern that, when the establishment of one special political mission was discussed in June 2009, the Secretary-General had submitted to the Security Council a report containing not only its mandate and its overall structure but also a detailed description of posts required. The structure and posts of special political missions were and must remain a matter to be discussed in the General Assembly from a budgetary and administrative standpoint; his delegation therefore requested the Secretariat to give due and prudent consideration to the division of labour between the Assembly and other United Nations organs.

41. During informal consultations, his delegation would pay particular attention to vacancy rates and unencumbered balances, as well as resources allocated for the services of consultants. He recalled that, as expressed in previous Assembly resolutions, special political missions should resort to hiring consultants only when very specialized expertise not found in the United Nations system was required.

42. Lastly, he reiterated that the responsibility for ensuring the safety of United Nations mission staff should be shared by all Member States and the Secretariat; his delegation therefore supported in principle the measures described in the Secretary-General's letter to the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/64/10).

43. **Mr. Shin** Boo-nam (Republic of Korea) said that special political missions had become one of the Organization's most important tools for preventing, controlling and resolving conflicts, as well as for post-conflict peacebuilding. As the number, role and budgets of such missions had significantly expanded over the previous 10 years, the relevant departments of the Secretariat should continue efforts to introduce standard operating procedures for establishing, maintaining, overseeing and liquidating each special political mission. The resulting greater synergy would promote more effective implementation of the missions' mandates.

44. His delegation was open to pursuing the informal discussions between the Secretary-General and Member States aimed at improving the current funding arrangements for special political missions. Lastly, with regard to the letter dated 9 December 2009 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/64/10), his delegation welcomed and supported the Secretary-General's request to draw on the proposed budget of UNAMA to meet the most highly prioritized security requirements for the period between 1 January and 30 April 2010.

45. **Ms. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan) said that the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia had been established in Ashgabat in 2008 with the support of all five of the Central Asian States. Its main function was to help the Governments of the countries of the region to address common problems such as drugs, terrorism and extremism, as well as to promote non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, mitigate the effects of the financial and economic crisis, manage water resources and respond to environmental degradation. The Centre had participated in developing joint workplans on a number of issues, including international legal cooperation to combat biological, chemical and nuclear terrorism.

46. In June 2009, the Centre had reported to the Security Council on its work, and had been praised for its efforts. Given that Central Asia covered a very large area, coordination of the Centre's activity with the Governments of the region would require four additional staff positions, one in each capital, to handle political and communications matters, expand activities, collect information and maintain relationships with international and regional organizations on the ground. It was important for the General Assembly to support the Centre's 2010 budget and staffing proposals.

47. **Mr. Panahov** (Azerbaijan) said that his delegation welcomed the activity and objectives of the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, which played a significant role in organizing international conferences, seminars and consultations in its various fields of activity, as well as in facilitating cross-border cooperation for joint actions to address common threats and challenges including international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime and environmental degradation. As a supporter of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and global efforts to combat the above-mentioned crimes, his delegation considered that the Centre was of paramount importance and had a role to play in ensuring regional security in Central Asia. It should therefore receive the required resources to ensure its effective functioning, within the Organization's financial capabilities.

48. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) echoed the support expressed by the representatives of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan for broader representation of the Centre in each country of Central Asia.

49. **Ms. Berlanga** (Mexico) said her delegation was deeply concerned that the reports on special political missions, which accounted for some 20 per cent of the United Nations regular budget, had been submitted for the Committee's consideration almost one week after the scheduled end of the main part of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Bearing in mind the dramatic expansion since 2002 of those missions' role, size, scope and, most importantly, resource requirements, her delegation would be undertaking an exhaustive analysis of the Secretary-General's request for resources.

50. A separate account should be established for all special political missions and should be funded on the basis of the scale of assessments used for peacekeeping missions. As pointed out by the Advisory Committee, the scale of the resource requirements for special political missions, and their volatility, distorted the picture of trends in the regular budget as a whole from biennium to biennium and rendered analysis of developments in the rest of the regular budget difficult.

51. According to Article 17, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, it was the responsibility of the General Assembly to consider and approve the budget of the Organization. Her delegation therefore concurred with the Advisory Committee that the

Secretary-General's provision of administrative and budgetary details to the Security Council should not be understood by the Secretariat as prejudging in any way the General Assembly's decision with respect to the administrative, budgetary and structural aspects of the missions. Requests for resources should be supported by clear justification on how existing capacity needed to be supplemented and adequate information on past performance.

52. **Mr. Askarov** (Uzbekistan) said that, some years previously, the effectiveness and usefulness of the United Nations in some parts of the world and some areas of activity had been called into question. However, the Organization had recovered its credibility. Its effectiveness was dependent on the presence of United Nations bodies in each region, and the appropriateness of those bodies' assessments; for that reason, appropriate resources must be made available to them. He joined the representatives of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in supporting the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia within its established mandate. In that connection, he called for the allocation of the necessary resources to create four additional National Officer positions in the regional of Central Asia and to provide funds for staff travel.

53. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua) said that his delegation regretted the late submission of the estimates in respect of special political missions for 2010. Furthermore, it was hard to understand how, less than two months after the Secretary-General's introduction of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, which contained a provision for special political missions of about $829 million, the estimated requirement for those missions for 2010-2011 had increased to almost $1,200 million. He would be requesting clarification on that point in informal consultations.

54. His delegation was also concerned that the budget for special political missions had increased twelvefold in the previous nine years, with UNAMI and UNAMA currently accounting for almost 70 per cent of the total sum. The significant increase had led to an unacceptable distortion of the regular budget; it was therefore absolutely necessary to establish a separate account for such missions. Furthermore, as it was not clear why the scale of assessments applicable to the regular budget continued to be used to finance them, the existing arrangements should be analysed.

55. **Mr. Diab** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the budget for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) violated the budgetary guidelines established in General Assembly resolutions 55/231 and 63/261 because it included activities outside the Special Envoy's mandate. In particular, expected accomplishment (c), "facilitation in support of a strengthened response by all Member States to the remaining provisions of Security Council resolution 1680 (2006)", had no place in the proposed programme budget because resolution 1680 (2006) referred to the establishment of diplomatic relations and the delineation of borders, matters that should be negotiated bilaterally between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. It was unacceptable for the Special Envoy to keep citing Syria's name in his reports when it had implemented all relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) by completing a full withdrawal from Lebanon, a fact acknowledged by numerous reports of the Secretary-General. The party that was failing to comply with resolution 1559 (2004) was Israel, which persistently violated Lebanese territorial sovereignty. The Security Council should focus on bringing pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw from the Shab'a farmlands, Kafr Shuba and the northern part of the town of Al-Ghajar.

56. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) had overstepped his mandate in a number of other unexpected ways. According to an Israeli newspaper, he had requested the Israeli Government to halt indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel mediated by Turkey in June 2008, and had urged the Government of Israel to cancel its intended withdrawal from the town of Al-Ghajar. A Special Envoy who sabotaged negotiations, encouraged continued occupation and focused on bilateral issues between Syria and Lebanon while ignoring Israel's violations of Lebanese sovereignty should have his mandate terminated. The Committee should not allocate any financial resources to the Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

Agenda item 131: Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/64/545 and A/64/574)

57. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/64/545), said that the report provided an estimate of the anticipated final level of expenditure under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, taking into account changes in parameters for inflation and exchange rates and cost-of-living adjustments compared with the previous update of parameters at the time of approval of the first performance report (A/63/573).The estimate was based on actual budgetary expenditures for the first 21 months of the biennium.

58. The estimates in the report reflected a net decrease of $85.4 million, has expenditure had fallen by $92.8 million and income had fallen by $7.4 million. The expenditure reduction resulted mainly from downward adjustments under 27 budget sections, including reductions connected with special political missions; common staff costs; and the pace of recruitment and related operations for the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Safety and Security.

59. A $27.9 million decrease in inflation provisions was partially offset by an unfavourable exchange-rate situation, leading to $22.9 million of additional requirements, reflecting the general weakening of the United States dollar in a number of operational rates during the year as compared with those assumed in the revised appropriation. In particular, movements in exchange rates against the Swiss franc and the euro had resulted in additional requirements of $18.7 million and $6.9 million respectively. Inflation adjustments had been made on the basis of the latest available consumer price index information, and of differences in actual post adjustment indices for staff in the Professional category and above and actual cost-of-living adjustments of salary scales for staff in the General Service and related categories compared with the assumptions made in the revised appropriations.

60. Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses incurred in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/239 amounted to some $3.8 million; most of that amount representing commitments relating to peace and security ($3.4 million). Commitments relating to the operation of the International Court of Justice amounted to $410,000.

61. In his report on the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/64/486), the Secretary-General had provided information on progress made and had indicated that the Commission was dedicated to completing the project within the approved funding level of $14,333,100. Accordingly, the commitments of $1,936,400 under sections 32, 33 and 35 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, which had been authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/238, would still be required for the implementation of the project in the coming bienniums.

62. The second performance report (A/64/545) also covered the organization of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/277. The final expenditure incurred against the resources committed in support of the conference under various sections of the programme budget for the biennium were estimated at $611,400.

63. The Secretary-General had submitted a report (A/64/562) on the implementation of his limited discretion for budgetary implementation, authorized in General Assembly resolution 60/283, on an experimental basis, for the bienniums 2006-2007 and 2008-2009. Based on the results of the experiment, as well as lessons learned, the Secretary-General proposed to continue the limited discretionary provision as an established procedure with some modifications. During the biennium 2008-2009, such authority had been utilized to address the continued funding of a dedicated project team to maintain momentum and ensure progress on major foundation tasks relating to the enterprise resource planning system and for operational preparedness and business continuity in a protracted crisis resulting from an influenza pandemic. Those requirements had been met through the utilization of potential savings identified under a number of sections of the programme budget, as detailed in the second performance report (A/64/545).

64. Lastly, post incumbency and other changes accounted for a net decrease of $94.4 million. Savings in post-related expenditure reflected the vacancy situation during the period and actual payroll experience, while a number of other areas of expenditure also reflected decreased requirements, notably resulting from the

impact of vacancies, resources for special political missions, and the delays to the international public sector accounting standards project. Increases primarily related to other staff costs and travel of staff, including such factors as special political mission requirements, changes in mission subsistence allowance rates for military observers in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), unanticipated meeting attendance and coverage requirements, and technical assistance and advisory services in the regional commissions. The second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/64/545) contained a comprehensive analysis of changes by area of expenditure. Income had decreased by $7.4 million, as a result of changes to staff assessment levels under income section 1, an increase under income section 2 and an increase under income section 3.

65. Section V of the report (A/64/545) indicated the recosting methodologies used by other international organizations, as reported by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination pursuant to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 63/263. The final estimates for 2008-2009 were $4,792.4 million for the expenditure sections and $550.5 million for the income sections.

66. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/64/574), commended the Secretary-General for submitting the second performance report (A/64/545) earlier than in the past, to ensure its availability to Member States in time for their consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. The Advisory Committee believed that the second performance report would be a more useful accountability and monitoring tool for Member States in their review of the financial aspects of budget performance if it contained greater analysis of data and trends over past bienniums.

67. Noting that vacancy rates remained higher than budgeted, even though new posts were requested in the proposed budget of any given biennium, the Advisory Committee believed that post requirements and budgeted vacancy rates might not be based on realistic assumptions and was concerned about the related financial implications. It urged closer budgetary control in that connection.

68. The performance reports indicated no overall improvement in expenditure overruns for staff travel. Having previously highlighted its concern about such overexpenditure, especially in consecutive bienniums, the Advisory Committee reiterated its request for an analysis of its underlying causes. Tighter planning assumptions and budgetary control mechanisms should also be used to keep expenditure within the approved budget.

69. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/64/545).

70. **Mr. Elhag** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the budgetary procedures established by General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 should be strictly adhered to. Recosting had been an integral part of budgeting procedures for over two decades, and any attempt to modify recosting in order to achieve savings would have detrimental effects on mandate implementation. While the Group of 77 and China took note of the information provided by the Secretary-General on recosting methodologies used by other international organizations, it wished to stress that the tasks of the United Nations were unique, and recosting measures needed to be customized to meet its unique needs.

71. **Mr. Råsbrant** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed concern that so many reports were being introduced so late in the session. With respect to the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, he took note of the expenditure decrease, the higher-than-budgeted vacancy rates, and the information on recosting methodologies used by other international organizations, and looked forward to discussion of those and other issues in informal consultations.

72. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan), said that his delegation agreed with the view expressed by the Advisory Committee in its report regarding the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 that more realistic assumptions about vacancy rates should be made in order to avoid overbudgeting. He hoped that the Secretariat would address the issue of post incumbency in order to ensure more efficient use of resources.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.